

112 STATE STREET
DRAWER 20
MONTPELIER, VT 05620-2601
TEL: 802-828-2811

FAX: 802-828-2342
TTY (VT): 1-800-734-8390
e-mail: vtdps@psd.state.vt.us
Internet: <http://www.state.vt.us/psd>



**STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

MEDIA RELEASE

**DPS ISSUES REVISED VERMONT
ELECTRIC PLAN DRAFT**

Montpelier, VT – The Vermont Department of Public Service today issued for public review and comments a revised *2004 Vermont Electric Plan – Public Comment Draft*. On December 8, 2003, the Department issued a draft *Vermont Comprehensive Energy And Electric Plan*, which was subject to multiple public hearings, and a written comment period. This new draft, focusing on the *Electric Plan*, incorporates a thoughtful and thorough evaluation of the written and oral comments received from the general public and numerous interest and advocacy groups.

"We were very fortunate to get extensive comment from public hearings and focused stakeholder meetings. We have expanded the Plan's discussion of renewable energy, energy efficiency, affordability, bulk transmission and wholesale market developments," said David O'Brien, DPS Commissioner. The new draft plan includes whole chapters dedicated to topics such as emerging technologies, demand side management, efficiency and conservation, as well as the statutory process for utility resource planning. Greater depth has been added to the theme of lowering electricity prices, including discussion of how Vermont reached this point, as well as recommendations to reverse the trend of high prices. The Department gave considerable attention to expiration of major energy supplies and strategies for diversifying the energy portfolio in the years ahead.

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The 2003 draft combined the *Twenty-Year Electric Plan* and the *Comprehensive Energy Plan*. They are separated in this draft and will be released as two separate documents. The Department recognized the complexities of combining the two planning requirements and decided to focus first on completing an electric plan, especially given that the last completed electric plan was in 1994, while the last Comprehensive Energy Plan was completed in 1998. Once the Electric Plan is released in final form DPS will begin work on a new Comprehensive Energy Plan.

The *Electric Plan* addresses major electric energy issues and decisions that are likely to face the state over the next twenty years, and addresses issues such as reducing electric rates while increasing the value that energy efficiency programs provide to ratepayers, developing rate design structures that encourage economic growth in all sectors, ensuring affordable electric service for Vermonters of all income levels, and exploring renewable energy and distributed generation options.

Before issuing a final draft, the Department will take comments on the plan through two additional public hearings, as well as stakeholder meetings with utility managers, business, environmental and consumer groups that gave input on the previous draft. After this process, a final draft will be issued with a final opportunity for comment.

The plan is posted on the department's web site at www.state.vt.us/psd/ and will be available at regional planning commissions, regional libraries and on request from the Department. The dates and locations of the additional hearings will be announced soon. Information about hearings will be available on the Department's Web site, by calling 802 828-2811, via electronic mail to ytdps@psd.state.vt.us , or by writing to the Department of Public Service, 112 State Street, Drawer 20, Montpelier, VT 05620-2601. Comments are always welcome.